

VZCZCXRO8954
OO RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHTRO
DE RUCNDT #1181/01 3521957
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 171957Z DEC 08
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5544
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 001181

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/17/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [RS](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: GEORGIA SRSG VERBEKE CONSIDERS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
UN MANDATE

Classified By: Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. Georgia SRSG Johan Verbeke told Ambassador DiCarlo on December 16 he would likely propose a more robust UN mandate for the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) when drafting the next periodic report on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia. The report will be completed mid-January and released in early February. Verbeke outlined advantages and disadvantages of another technical rollover for UNOMIG when it expires on February 15, and sought out U.S. views on such a move. He believed Russia would fight against a technical rollover. Instead, he believed Russia would push to establish a reduced mandate that would solidify the status quo and allow Russia to argue that implementation of the September 8 ceasefire agreement is complete. Verbeke believed the Abkhaz could be allies in establishing a more robust international presence in Abkhazia. END SUMMARY.

Robust Monitoring Mission

12. (C) Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Johan Verbeke, told Ambassador DiCarlo and Poloff on December 16 he would propose a more robust UN mandate for Abkhazia/Georgia when he submits his periodic Report of the Secretary-General (SYG) to the UN Secretariat. Verbeke believes that a full-fledged "classical peacekeeping mission" might not be feasible, but he will likely propose it as a straw man in the report with the understanding that it would be reduced to a "robust monitoring mission" during the course of Security Council negotiations. Verbeke is currently concentrating his efforts, through the Geneva process, on reaching consensus on a security regime for Abkhazia. The SRSG would support a Security Council resolution that would enshrine both the security regime and the enhanced mission to monitor its implementation. (Note: DPA and DPKO experts have provided us with additional details about the UN Secretariat's likely recommendations, which will be reported septel.)

Technical Rollover

13. (C) Verbeke said he understood that there was a prevailing view in the Secretariat and among interested countries that another technical rollover of UNOMIG may be necessary due to the short time between release of the report with his recommendations (February 5, 2009) and the expiration of the UNOMIG mandate (February 15, 2009), and also due to the lack of a coherent view among the UN, OSCE, and EU on a way forward. He warned that a technical rollover would further delay a decision on the future international presence in Abkhazia, which could work against Georgia's interest if international support for Georgia's role in the August conflict continues to wane. On the other hand, he thought another rollover would provide an opportunity for the UN and EU to synchronize a review of options for the UN mandate with the EU's review of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM), due to occur at the

end of March 2009.

14. (C) Verbeke thought Russia would resist a technical rollover, but instead would seek to establish a reduced mandate for the UN in Abkhazia that would enshrine the status quo and allow Russia to claim that the issue had been resolved. Resolving the issue in February would also preempt any coordinated inter-institutional exercise between the UN and EU in March. Verbeke pointed to the ongoing discussions in Vienna over renewal of the OSCE Mission in South Ossetia (which expires at the end of 2008) as illustrative of tactics we might expect from Russia during discussions of the UN mandate. Russia, he posited, prefers to deal with the South Ossetia and Abkhazia mandates on their own merits, as it is easier to whittle away at the mandates by tackling them separately. Verbeke believed Russia would eventually acquiesce to a minimal OSCE mission in South Ossetia, as it would allow Russia to claim that the security discussions mandated by the August 12 and September 8 agreements have been completed. A renewed OSCE mandate would also provide an incentive for the EUMM to hasten the completion of its own mission.

15. (C) Ambassador DiCarlo agreed that Russia would make difficulties when it came time to renew the UN mission, but she framed the question of whether to approve a technical rollover in terms of whether it would buy us time to make sure the eventual UN mandate was something we wanted. If we were to pursue a technical rollover, it would be important to be certain that an underlying process was in place to come to a workable arrangement for security. The U.S. wants to see a strong international presence in

USUN NEW Y 00001181 002 OF 002

Abkhazia, she said, but our soundings in New York indicated weak desire on the part of the Europeans to transform the EUMM into a longer-term observer presence-- making it more important to have a robust UN presence.

16. (C) Verbeke thought the Abkhaz de facto leaders could be helpful in trying to establish a more robust UN mission. He said there were "elements in their proposals on which we can construct something meaningful," referring to proposals that had been solicited by the Geneva co-chairs during the second round of talks in November for an incident response and resolution mechanism. DiCarlo agreed that the Abkhaz have an interest in maintaining an international presence in order to help them maintain some distance from Russia, but she also thought it would be difficult to dodge Russian attempts to achieve implicit recognition of Abkhazia, when negotiating the new UN mandate.
Khalilzad